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THE  
QUESTION  
ANSWERED,

Whether saving Faith in CHRIST, is a Duty  
required by the moral Law, of all those  
who live under the Gospel Revelation?

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By ALVERET JACKSON.

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*This is his commandment, that we should believe on the name of  
his son Jesus Christ, and love one another, as he gave us  
commandment. 1 John iii. 23.*

*—The weightier matters of the law, judgment, mercy,  
and faith; these ought ye to have done.— Matth. xxiii. 23.*

Q. "What doth God require of us, that we may escape  
his wrath and curse, due to us for sin?"

Ans. "To escape the wrath and curse of God, due to  
us for sin, God requireth of us faith in *Jesus Christ*,  
repentance unto life, with the diligent use of all the  
outward means whereby *Christ* communicateth to us  
the benefits of redemption." *Assemb. Catech. Q. 85.*

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## The Question answered,

Whether saving faith in *Christ*, is a duty required by the moral law, of all those who live under the gospel revelation?

**I**N order to set the case before us in a true light, and prevent mistakes, it is necessary for us to premise two things, *viz.*

FIRST, That the matter here enquired after, is not, Whether the object of saving faith, the Lord *Jesus Christ*, is discoverable by the light of nature; or, is only made known to men by the supernatural light of divine revelation: for it is quite out of all dispute with us, that the person and offices of *Christ*, and the way of sinners salvation by faith in him, were never discoverable to any creature by the light of natural reason; since, from the beginning of the world, it was never known, that any man attained to this knowledge of *Christ*, but either by the immediate inspiration of the Spirit of God, or by means of the ministry or writings of those, who were thus divinely inspired. For the holy apostles assert, that *Jesus Christ*, and him crucified, that wisdom of God

*in a mystery*, of which they spake, and which only they *determined* to make known to men ; was that, *which none of the princes*, for wisdom and knowledge, *of this world knew* ; neither can they know these *deep things of God*, as natural men, or by the light of nature ; *because they are spiritually discerned* ; and are known only by those unto whom God hath revealed them by his Spirit <sup>a</sup>. Unto which truth, the prophets of the old testament also bear witness, as it is written, *Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love him* <sup>b</sup> : but God hath revealed them unto us by his Spirit. And whatsoever the prophets spake of this salvation, and testified before-hand of the sufferings of Christ, and the glory that should follow, was all spoken and testified, not by the light of nature, but by the Spirit of Christ which was in them <sup>c</sup>. For this was a mystery so hid in God, from ages and generations, that even the holy angels, those *principalities and powers in heavenly places*, have it made known to them by the church <sup>d</sup>, unto whom God hath manifested his word through preaching <sup>e</sup> ; and desire to look into <sup>f</sup> it by the light of divine revelation : nor hath *flesh and blood*, with all its boasted excellencies and advantages, ever revealed that rock unto any man, on which the church is built, which is *Jesus Christ* ; but the Father which is in heaven <sup>g</sup>,  
by

<sup>a</sup> 1 Cor. ii. — 14. <sup>b</sup> Isa. lxiv. 4. 1 Cor. ii. 9. <sup>c</sup> 1 Pet. i. 10, 11.

<sup>d</sup> Ephes. iii. 8, 9, 10. <sup>e</sup> Tit. i. 3. <sup>f</sup> 1 Pet. i. 11, 12.

<sup>g</sup> Matth. xvi. 16, 17, 18.



by the Spirit of wisdom and revelation, in the knowledge of him<sup>h</sup>.

AND hence, it was never known, that any of those men, who deny, or disregard all divine revelation, and will own and admit nothing to have any concern in religion, but what is knowable by the light of nature, and demonstrable by human reason; I say, it was never known nor heard of, that any of these men, made the knowledge of *Christ*, and faith in him, any part of their religion; which surely, some of these wise students in the school of nature would have done, if these things had been at all discoverable by the light of nature, or demonstrable by reason: but they are indeed so far from being apprehended by this light, that wherever it is preferred above divine revelation, and set up for the only guide in matters of religion, such persons are by it excluded from any share therein, even under the clearest light of the glorious gospel of *Christ*.

NOR doth the moral law, by which *is the knowledge of sin*, give unto men the knowledge of *Christ*: For this *righteousness of God without the law is manifested, being witnessed by the law and the prophets; even the righteousness of God, which is by faith of Jesus Christ, unto all, and upon all them that believe*<sup>i</sup>. In which text it is plainly observable; that the righteousness of God, which is by faith of  
*Jesus*

<sup>h</sup> 1 Cor. iii. 11. Eph. i. 17.    <sup>i</sup> Rom. iii. 20. 21. 22,

*Jesus Christ*, is neither provided, nor manifested or declared by, but without the law, and that, being provided of God, as soon as it is manifested and declared by the gospel, it is immediately, fully, and steadfastly approved, attested, and *witnessed by the law*.

AND hence, it is plain also, that the only reason, why man, who, in his state of innocence, had a perfect copy of the moral law impressed upon him, did not believe in *Christ*, was because he had not in, and by this impressed law, a revelation of *Christ*, the righteousness of God, and the end of the law for righteousness to every one that believeth: and, how indeed should he believe in him of whom he had not heard<sup>k</sup>? But if he had heard of him, or had had the knowledge of him by the law and light of nature, and had not believed in him, that very not believing, would have been, in him, a deviation from the divine image and likeness, and he had been no longer innocent, but guilty, in not acting up to his light and knowledge; for to him that knoweth to do good, and doth it not, to him it is sin.<sup>l</sup> And,

SECONDLY, The matter here enquired after is not, Whether saving faith in *Christ* is the gift of God,<sup>m</sup> to all those that have it; and that not of themselves procured or merited, but given to them on the behalf of *Christ*; <sup>n</sup> that is, thro' his merit and purchase; and as a fruit of that holy Spirit, which he shed on them abundantly,

<sup>k</sup> Rom. x. 4. 14.

<sup>l</sup> Jam. iv. 17.

<sup>m</sup> Eph. ii. 8.

<sup>n</sup> Phil. i. 29.

*abundantly, thro' Jesus Christ our Saviour* <sup>o</sup>; and without whose *going away* <sup>p</sup>, that is, the death, resurrection, and ascension of *Christ*, he would not have come unto them: for this also is quite out of the question with us; and we stedfastly believe, that this *precious faith* is obtained as a gift of grace, *thro' the righteousness of God, and our Saviour Jesus Christ* <sup>q</sup>; that is, it is procured and purchased by the righteousness, blood, and merits of *Jesus Christ* for us, and comes through them to us: neither is it any less a free gift to us, because it is purchased for us by *Christ*; for we did not purchase it, but *Christ* for us. And men may as well plead, that we are not *justified by the blood of Christ* <sup>r</sup>, nor *thro' the redemption that is in him*; because we are *justified freely by the grace of God* <sup>s</sup>, and receive *a gift of righteousness* <sup>t</sup>; as plead, that faith is not purchased by, and obtained thro' the righteousness of God our Saviour; because faith *is the gift of God*; when we are expressly told, that *it is given us in the behalf of Christ* <sup>u</sup>. But,

THE question before us, is, Whether this same saving faith in *Christ*, is not also a duty, required by the moral law of God, of all those who live under the gospel revelation, and have *the word of faith preached* unto them <sup>w</sup>?

I AM sensible there are some, who will think they have sufficiently answered this question, when they have said, How can that be a duty, required

<sup>o</sup> Tit. iii. 5. 6.

<sup>p</sup> Joh. xvi. 7.

<sup>q</sup> 2 Pet. i. 1.

<sup>r</sup> Rom. v. 9.

<sup>s</sup> Rom. iii. 24, 25, 26.

<sup>t</sup> Ch. v. 17.

<sup>u</sup> Phil. i. 29.

<sup>w</sup> Rom. x. 8.



required of men by the moral law of God, which they have not power to perform of themselves ; but wherever saving faith is found, it is the gift of God, and of his operation in us ? But those who think this a solid and sufficient answer to our question, should reflect, that they may with equal reason say, How can the moral law of God, require either perfect and unfinning obedience, or full satisfaction for our offences, of us ; which we have not power to perform, and the latter of which we never had ; and with whomsoever they are found, they are the gifts of God, and the operations of *Christ* for us : and yet, if they were not due from us as the principals, they could never have been required of, nor performed by *Christ* as the surety for us ; and wherever they are not found, the want of them, (that is, the want of perfect righteousness, unfinning obedience, and full satisfaction for our offences) exposeth the offender to the *curse* and condemnation of the *law*, to the *wrath of God*, and eternal damnation\*. And if that be required of us, by the moral law, under pain of eternal damnation, which we can have only by the gift of God, and the operation, or work of *Christ* for us ; then it is also possible, that by the same moral law, and under the same penalty, that faith in *Christ* may be required of us, which we can have only by the gift of God, and the operation of the holy Spirit in us. And since it is possible that

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\* Rom. iii. 19. Gal. iii. 10. Jam. ii. 10. Eph. v. 5, 6.



it may be so, it concerns us seriously to enquire, and to be well and truly resolved, whether it is not really so. And for this end is the question before us proposed, and unto which my answer is in the affirmative; and that for the following reasons, which to me appear cogent and conclusive. And if to any who shall read these papers, they shall not appear so, I desire they would be so kind, as by a fair and full answer to inform me better.

THE reasons which induce me to answer this question in the affirmative, are these following :

FIRST, Because believing on the Lord *Jesus Christ* hath eternal salvation inseparably affixed to it, by the word and promise of the faithful God, as the certain end of it, with which it is infallibly connected.

SECONDLY, The contrary to this faith, even not believing on the Lord *Jesus Christ*, the Son of God, is assigned as the cause of mens condemnation, and stands reproved in the word of God, as a damning sin.

THIRDLY, The holy Scripture declares, that faith in *Christ* is a commanded duty; and proves, that it is a work which God, by the moral law, requires of all men to whom the gospel is preached.

FOURTHLY, For any man to affirm, that this faith is not required by the moral law, is, in effect, to oppose and contradict the express word of God.

FIFTHLY, Those who appear most warm against allowing faith in *Christ* to be a duty, do yet own and acknowledge, *that* faith to be the duty of all men, to whom the gospel is preached, which the scripture declares is a saving faith.

SIXTHLY, Such a faith, repentance, love, and fear of God, as are no duties, can have no concern at all in the holiness and happiness of men.

SEVENTHLY, It is no where declared, affirmed, nor taught in the word of God, that faith in *Christ* is not a Duty.

EIGHTHLY, The only argument produced, to prove that faith in *Christ* is not a duty, is not only unscriptural, but, I think, in its tendency, utterly destructive of all true religion.

BUT to consider these reasons more particularly.

FIRST, Believing on the Lord *Jesus Christ* hath eternal salvation inseparably affixed to it, by the word and promise of the faithful God, as the certain end of it, with which it is infallibly connected; and therefore it is properly called *saving faith*. This proposition I lay down first, as giving ground to the denomination of that faith of which we here speak, and by which it is distinguished from all other kinds of faith. And it will be further necessary for me here to explain the nature of it, and shew what *saving faith* is; that if possible all mistakes about it, and of what we mean by it, may be prevented.

Now

NOW this *saving faith* is not that self-deceiving, unaffected assent to the truth of the gospel record concerning *Christ*, which many persons, under the light of divine revelation, profess to have; who yet remain dead in trespasses and sins; and are loose, vain, wicked, and ungodly in their conversations; and neither have their hearts purified, nor their lives reformed by it. They say they have faith; but they have no works of righteousness, nor fruits of holiness. And can such a faith save them? No, it cannot; for *faith if it have not works, is dead being alone*.

NOR doth saving faith consist in a certain, assured persuasion, that *Christ* is ours, and we are his by election, before we believe in him, and as the ground and foundation of our believing on him for life and salvation. For though this is a glorious truth in itself, yet, as to us, it is a secret and hidden one, of which no man can have any personal knowledge, persuasion, or assurance at all, antecedent to his believing in *Christ*, or as the foundation of it: for the word of God hath given us no rules, whereby any man can know his election of God, before he believes in *Christ*; and therefore all pretences to the knowledge of this, before faith, and without it, are nothing but groundless, unwarrantable presumption.

NEITHER is saving faith a full, personal, subjective assurance, that *Christ* is mine, and that he died for me in particular, even on the



foundation of the promise embraced by faith. For, as this assurance is the reflex act of faith, so the direct act of faith must necessarily go before it, without which it cannot be. And when a man doth truly believe, and put forth the direct act of faith on *Christ*, as held forth in the word of the gospel; yet even then, this assurance is no more essential to that saving act of faith, nor inseparable from it, than seeing my true shadow is essential to, and inseparable from my beholding the light, and partaking of the quickening influences of the sun; which, by ten thousand interposing clouds, may be so intercepted from my views, that I cannot see my shadow, and which I might have seen by his unclouded light. This, out of all dispute, is the case of many true believers in *Christ*, who *walk* in the clouds and *darkness* of inward trouble and perplexity, *and have no light<sup>a</sup>* of comfortable assurance, and personal satisfaction, of their own interest in him; but are *tossed with tempests, and not comforted<sup>a</sup>*; and may continue *all their life-time, through fear of death, subject to bondage<sup>b</sup>*; and yet, notwithstanding all this, they are of the happy number of those, who are saved and delivered by *Christ*.

BUT saving faith is something that is peculiar to that select number, who are described in scripture under the character of true believers, and which is not found in any others, but in them alone; which is not the case of the mere assent before-mentioned. It is also something, that

<sup>a</sup> Isa. l. 10.

<sup>a</sup> Chap. liv. 11.

<sup>b</sup> Heb. ii. 15.



that is common to all true believers without exception, which the before-mentioned assurance is not : and therefore, true saving faith is neither that assent, nor this assurance. What then is it ? I answer, True saving faith is a sinner's fleeing to, receiving of, and resting on the Lord *Jesus Christ* alone for salvation, as he is preached unto men by the gospel. Concerning which observe,

1. THE true ground and warrant of this faith is a preached gospel, the *faithful saying, and worthy of all acceptation, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners<sup>c</sup> : for this is the word of faith which we preach<sup>d</sup>*, by virtue of the divine commission, which gives license and authority, to all those who are made ministers of it by *Christ*, to go into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature under heaven<sup>e</sup> ; for they have the everlasting gospel to preach to them that dwell on the earth, and to every nation, and kindred, and tongue, and people<sup>f</sup> ; and which, according to the commandment of the everlasting God, is made known to all nations for the obedience of faith<sup>g</sup>.

2. THE proper object of this faith, is the Lord *Jesus Christ*, as he is preached by the gospel<sup>h</sup>, in his person and offices, obedience and sufferings, as the Saviour of sinners, the one Mediator between God and men<sup>i</sup>, in whom alone there is salvation for them that are lost<sup>k</sup>.

3. THE

<sup>c</sup> 1 Tim. i. 15.    <sup>d</sup> Rom. x. 8.    <sup>e</sup> Mark xvi. 15. Col. i. 23.    <sup>f</sup> Rev. xiv. 6.    <sup>g</sup> Rom. xvi. 26.    <sup>h</sup> 1 Cor. ii. 2. 2 Cor. iv. 5.    <sup>i</sup> 1 Cor. i. 23.    <sup>j</sup> 1 Tim. ii. 5.    <sup>k</sup> Acts iv. 12. Matth. xviii. 11.

3. THE distinguishing acts of this faith, are fleeing to, receiving of, and resting on the Lord *Jesus Christ* alone for salvation; or believing on his name, as he is preached by the gospel. Hence the scripture expresseth it, by *fleeing for refuge to lay hold of the hope set before us*<sup>l</sup>: *receiving Christ Jesus the Lord*<sup>m</sup>: *believing on his name*<sup>n</sup>: *trusting in Christ*<sup>o</sup>: *leaning p*, and *staying on him*<sup>q</sup>.

4. THE persons, who are bound in duty thus to believe on, or receive the Lord *Jesus Christ*; are all and every one to whom he is preached; for this is the obedience of faith which the gospel requires of *all nations*<sup>r</sup>, and of every creature to whom it comes; and blames those as guilty of the greatest crime, who receive not *Christ*<sup>s</sup>, and *obey not the gospel*<sup>t</sup> of God; and for which, it dooms them to the heaviest punishment<sup>u</sup>. And well it may; for they stand indispensibly obliged thus to believe on, and receive the Lord *Jesus Christ*; and for any man to neglect receiving *so great salvation* preached unto him, is the highest and vilest ingratitude<sup>w</sup>. They are obliged to this also, by the excellency of the person that is preached to them; on whom, all those who refuse to receive him, put the highest affront, and pour the greatest contempt; and by shutting the door against him, treat him as one that is not worthy to be entertained by them<sup>x</sup>. And also, they stand obliged

<sup>l</sup> Heb. vi. 18. <sup>m</sup> Col. ii. 6. <sup>n</sup> John i. 12. <sup>o</sup> Eph. i. 12.

<sup>p</sup> Cant. viii. 5. <sup>q</sup> Isai. l. 10. <sup>r</sup> Rom. 16. 26. <sup>s</sup> John i. 11.

<sup>t</sup> Rom. x. 16. <sup>u</sup> 1 Pet. iv. 17. <sup>2</sup> Theff. i. 7, 8, 9.

<sup>w</sup> Heb. ii. 1, 2, 3, 4.

<sup>x</sup> Isai. liii. 2. John v. 40.

obliged to receive him, by their own want and necessity of him, since without believing on, and receiving of him, there is no way for them to escape eternal damnation <sup>y</sup>. And by many more ties, are they bound to this duty, as will fully appear in the following discourse. But,

5. THAT this faith, wherever it is found, is indeed saving; or, hath eternal salvation inseparably affixed to it, by the word and promise of the faithful God, as the certain end of it, with which it is infallibly connected; is most clearly and undeniably proved from the following texts, with many more that might be named: *To as many as received him, to them gave he power to become the sons of God; even to them that believe on his name<sup>z</sup>; and if sons, then heirs of God, and joint heirs with Christ<sup>a</sup>. Verily, verily, I say unto you, he that believeth on me hath everlasting life<sup>b</sup>.— And as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of man be lifted up: that whosoever believeth in him, should not perish, but have eternal life: for God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son; that is, to be lifted up, as the object of faith, on the pole of a preached gospel; that whosoever believeth in him, should not perish, but have everlasting life<sup>c</sup>. For the grand Commission given to the ministers of Christ, whose work and office it is, thus to lift him up, is, *Go ye into all the world,*  
and*

<sup>y</sup> Mar. xvi. 16. Joh. viii. 24. <sup>z</sup> Joh. i. 12. <sup>a</sup> Gal. iv. 7. Rom. viii. 17. <sup>b</sup> Joh. vi. 47. <sup>c</sup> Joh. iii. 14, 15, 16.



*and preach the gospel to every creature ; he that believeth, and is baptized, shall be saved<sup>d</sup> : and to say to every one that asketh them the question, What must I do to be saved? Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved<sup>e</sup>. For to him give all the prophets witness, that through his name whosoever believeth in him, shall receive remission of sins<sup>f</sup>,—for, be it known unto you, men and brethren, that through this man is preached unto you the forgiveness of sins : and by him all that believe are justified from all things<sup>g</sup>; and are of them that believe to the saving of the soul<sup>h</sup>, and who shall certainly receive the end of their faith, even the salvation of their souls<sup>i</sup>.*

SECONDLY, It is equally clear, and as certainly declared in the oracles of truth, that the contrary to this faith, even not believing on the Lord Jesus Christ, the Son of God, is assigned as the cause of mens condemnation, and stands reprov'd in the word of God as a damning sin ; which it could not possibly do, if faith in Christ was not a duty, required by the law ; for where no law is, there is no transgression<sup>k</sup>; and sin is not, cannot be imputed when, and where there is no law<sup>l</sup>: but when the Spirit of truth is come, he will reprove and convince the world of sin, because they believe not on me<sup>m</sup>; and again, he that believeth on him, is not condemned : but he that believeth not,

<sup>d</sup> Mar. xvi. 15, 16.<sup>e</sup> Act. xvi. 30, 31.<sup>f</sup> Ch. x. 43.<sup>g</sup> Ch. xiii. 38, 39.<sup>h</sup> Heb. x. 39.<sup>i</sup> 1. Pet. i. 9.<sup>k</sup> Rom. iv. 15.<sup>l</sup> Ch. v. 13.<sup>m</sup> Joh. xvi. 8, 9.



*not, is condemned already, because he hath not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God; and this is the condemnation, &c.<sup>n</sup> — for he that believeth not the Son, shall not see life; but the wrath of God abideth on him<sup>o</sup>; as it doth on them that perish; because they received not the love of the truth, that they might be saved<sup>p</sup>; for he that believeth not, shall be damned<sup>q</sup>: and the unbelieving (with other transgressors of the moral law there mentioned) shall have their part in the lake which burneth with fire and brimstone; which is the second death<sup>r</sup>: for the wages of sin is death<sup>s</sup>. And the most wicked servant hath no worse doom to fear, than a portion appointed with the unbelievers<sup>t</sup>. And the reason why they to whom the gospel is preached, do not enter into the promised rest, is twice over expressly asserted, to be BECAUSE of unbelief<sup>u</sup>: and if we were all so happy, as to look with the same eyes that the inspired writers did, none of us could miss seeing it; for they said, *so we see, that they could not enter in, BECAUSE of unbelief<sup>u</sup>.**

BUT if any are so blind, as not to see reason to believe, that any sinner is now condemned, or shall hereafter be eternally damned, for not believing in *Christ*, because this faith was never in the sinner's power to have, but is the gift of God, and of his operation; who was never pleased to bestow it upon, or

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to

<sup>n</sup> Joh. iii. 18, 19.<sup>o</sup> Verse 36.<sup>p</sup> 2. Thef. ii. 10.<sup>q</sup> Mar. xvi. 16.<sup>r</sup> Rev. xxi. 8.<sup>s</sup> Rom. vi. 23.<sup>t</sup> Luke xii. 45, 46.<sup>u</sup> Heb. iii. 19. and Ch. iv. 6.

to work it in him ; unto all such, as to them that are walking in darkness, I would in true and christian friendship address my self, and beseech them for the Lord's sake, to consider well, what they are doing, and whither they are going ; I would here give them timely notice, and faithfully warn them, before it be too late, to consider,

1. THAT the doctrine they embrace, and are endeavouring to spread, makes unbelief to be the work of God, as well as faith. And do you indeed believe so ? If you say, Nay, we believe that faith is the gift and work of God ; but that unbelief is the sin, and work of men. Then I must ask you, Why can you not see, that it is a just and righteous thing with God, to condemn men now, and if they continue in it, to damn them eternally for their unbelief, which is their own work ; and a most sinful and wicked work it is ; for *he that believeth not God, hath made him a liar ; because he believeth not the record that God gave of his Son<sup>w</sup> : and he that receiveth not Christ by believing on his name<sup>x</sup>, despiseth him<sup>y</sup>, and neglecteth the great salvation<sup>z</sup>. And what can be greater sins, than to make the God of truth a liar ; and to set Christ the precious Saviour, and his great salvation at nought, by rejecting him, as as did the wicked builders<sup>a</sup>, and Herod and his men of war<sup>b</sup> ; and how shall such finners, think you,*

<sup>w</sup> 1. Joh. v. 10.

<sup>x</sup> Joh. i. 11, 12.

<sup>y</sup> Luk. x. 16.

<sup>z</sup> Heb. ii. 2, 3. <sup>a</sup> Matt. ii. 42. <sup>b</sup> Act. iv. 11. Luk. xxiii. 11.

you, escape the great, the greater, nay, the greatest damnation <sup>c</sup>? Consider again,

2. THAT though I have more charity than to think you design it, yet you are going in the high road to deism, and walking in the counsel of those ungodly men. For why do these pretended masters of reason reject all divine revelation, and receive no part of the record that God hath given us in the bible? If you ask them, they will tell you, It is because they do not, they cannot, see reason to believe that it is true. And are not you saying the very same thing concerning a part of it; *viz.* That though the God of truth hath told you so often in the bible, that gospel-finders are condemned, and shall be damned, because they believe not in *Christ*; yet you say, you cannot believe it, because you cannot see reason for it? Do not both you and they say, that the authority and truth of God in his word, is no sufficient reason, why you should believe him, unless you can see other reasons of your own, for the truth of what he says? And thus you both agree to arraign divine revelation (they in the whole, and you in part) at the bar of your depraved reason, and there condemn it. Nay, consider well whether your principles do not amount to a charge against the divine Author of the scriptures of self contradiction; and whether you do not refuse to believe him, in one of his sayings, because you know not how to reconcile it with another. And again,

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<sup>c</sup> Heb. x. 28, 29.



3. CONSIDER whether you are not attempting to extinguish the flames of hell; for, according to your principles, I think there can be no fuel left among the sons of men, for them to prey upon; or any just reason, why any one of *Adam's* race should be damned; for none of the sons of *Adam* can ever be damned and perish eternally, but for one, or all, of these four causes; that is, either,

(1.) FOR the sin of their father *Adam*, in whom, as in their head and representative, they *all have sinned*<sup>d</sup>; and which, it was never in the power of any one of them, in their own proper persons, to prevent or help; because that sin was committed, before any of them came into a personal existence; and hence, the scripture saith, *it was by one that sinned; and by one man's disobedience many were made sinners; and the judgment was by one to condemnation; and through the offence of one many are dead; and by one man's offence, death reigned by one*<sup>b</sup>. Or,

(2.) FOR transgressing a law, which, as fallen creatures, they had not power to keep; for that *none of them keepeth the law*<sup>c</sup>, is evident in fact; and that *the carnal mind is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be*, is expressly asserted in the word of God; *so then, they that are in the flesh cannot please God*<sup>d</sup>; nor can the law and commandment, which was ordained unto life at first, give life to any of them now<sup>e</sup>, because it is become

*weak*

<sup>d</sup> Rom. v. 12.      <sup>b</sup> Rom. v. 15, 16, 17, 19.      <sup>c</sup> Joh. vii. 19.      <sup>d</sup> Rom. viii. 7, 8.      <sup>e</sup> Rom. vii. 10.      Gal. iii. 21.

*weak through the flesh*<sup>f</sup>: thus it appears that both *Jews and Gentiles are all under sin, and all the world is become guilty before God*<sup>g</sup>. Or,

(3.) FOR not making a full satisfaction to injured justice, and a broken law, for all their offences; which it was never in their power to do, neither before the fall, nor since: for all the services that ever they can perform, all the sacrifices that ever they can offer, and all the sufferings that ever they can endure, can never take away sin, nor justify a sinner before God; for *by the deeds and works of the law*, whether moral or ceremonial, and whether of obedience or sufferings, *shall no flesh, no man living, be justified in his sight*<sup>h</sup>. Or,

(4.) FOR not believing in, or not receiving the Lord *Jesus Christ*, preached unto them, as *the end of the law for righteousness*; which, you say, you cannot see was, in them, any crime worthy of eternal death; because it was not in their power to believe in, and receive him. And so, upon the whole, you can see no reason at all, why any son of *Adam* should perish eternally: for, as for the sin of *Adam*, it was never in the power of any single individual of his offspring to prevent it. And how then can they justly perish for it? Or how can they perish, for transgressing a law, which, as fallen creatures, they had not power to keep? or, for not making satisfaction for their offences, which it was never in their power to do? So that

<sup>f</sup> Rom. viii. 3.    <sup>g</sup> Chap. iii. 9, 19.    <sup>h</sup> Chap. iii. 19, 20.  
Gal. ii. 16. Heb. ix, and x. Psal. cxliiii. 2.

that the true import of your argument is, that there is no just reason, that any one of the sons of *Adam* should perish eternally; and this is the certain end to which your objection will lead you, if you pursue it, and persist in it: and therefore, it is high time for you to lay it aside, and to believe what the God of truth hath said in the forecited scriptures. *But if still you believe not, shall your unbelief make the faith of God in his word without effect? No, be yet abideth faithful; he cannot deny himself<sup>k</sup>: and even so, let God be true, and every man that contradicts him a liar; as it is written, That thou mightest be justified in thy sayings, and mightest overcome when thou art judged<sup>l</sup>.*

BUT that I may not leave you here, without using my best endeavours to lead you out of this darkness and perplexity, into which you have brought yourselves; I take the freedom to tell you further, that the fourth cause above-mentioned, of the eternal damnation of gospel-sinners, is by far the clearest, and most accountable of any of the four; for God hath told them in the word of faith, which is preached unto them, as plain and full as words can speak, that if they perish eternally, the cause of their perdition is their unbelief. And that they might not be at a loss, to know where their remedy lies, he hath likewise told them, that saving faith is the gift of God, on the behalf of *Christ*, by the operation of his holy Spirit. And further, that they might know  
how

<sup>k</sup> 2 Tim. ii. 13.

<sup>l</sup> Rom. iii. 3, 4.



how to obtain it, he hath also told them as plainly, that it is his will to be sought unto, and *enquired of by them, to do these things for them<sup>m</sup>*, and hath promised to give his *Holy Spirit, the Spirit of faith, to them that ask him<sup>n</sup>*; that if they *have not*, but die without this wisdom, it is *because they ask not<sup>o</sup>*; for every one that *asketh, receiveth*; and *whosoever shall call on the name of the Lord, shall be saved<sup>p</sup>*. And is not the faith of the report of the gospel, which, you say, they are obliged to have, and act, abundantly sufficient, to enable and encourage them thus to call on the name of the Lord? And are they not then worthy to perish in, and for that unbelief, from which they never asked to be saved and delivered; and for the want of that faith, which they never thought worth asking of God?

THIRDLY, The holy scripture declares, that faith in *Christ* is a commanded duty; and proves that it is a work, which God, by the moral law, requires of all men, to whom the gospel is preached. And,

I. THIS is as clearly and fully declared in the holy scriptures, as any other duty whatsoever; which is plain from the question proposed to our Lord, and the answer he returned to it, in *John* vi. 28, 29. Where it is observable, that the persons who asked the question, were such as professed themselves to be disciples of *Christ*;

<sup>m</sup> Ezek. xxxvi. 37.

<sup>n</sup> Luke xi. 13. 2 Cor. iv. 13.

<sup>o</sup> James i. 5. and iv. 2.

<sup>p</sup> Luke xi. 10.

Rom. x.

12, 13, 14, 15, 17.

*Christ* ; and yet they followed him only from carnal views, and for base and worldly ends <sup>r</sup> ; and when they were disappointed of them, they *went back, and walked no more with him* <sup>s</sup> : by which it was manifest, that as *Christ* told them, though they *saw* him in his person, ministry, and miracles, yet they *believed not* <sup>t</sup> : these are the men who said unto him, *What shall we do, that we might work the works of God ?* Surely, they could not mean by this enquiry, the works which God *doth*, and which are peculiar to him alone ; for those are works that can never be done by any creature : but they meant, the works which God required of them ; which it was their duty to do ; and which, being done, would be approved of by him, and be acceptable, and well-pleasing in his sight : unto which enquiry, *Jesus* answered pertinently, and according to the true design of the question, and said unto them, *This is the work of God*, that is, the work which God requires of you ; which it is your duty to do, and which is acceptable and well-pleasing to him ; *that ye believe on him whom he hath sent* ; for *without faith it is impossible to please God* <sup>u</sup>. Hence, it is evident, that believing on *Christ*, is a work that God requires of them that believe not ; but are yet under the power of a carnal mind, and moved by it, as the spring of their actions, even in their profession of religion, and following of *Christ* : for as their enquiry was not made about the works of God's

grace

<sup>r</sup> John vi. 26.    <sup>s</sup> Verse 66.    <sup>t</sup> Verse 36.    <sup>u</sup> Heb. xi. 6.

grace in men, but about their works of duty in obedience to God; so it would not have been proper and pertinent to the case in hand, for the answer to have been given to them about another thing, than that which they enquired after: and therefore, our Lord here speaks of faith, under the consideration of *a work of God*, to which they stood obliged; and not under the consideration of an efficacious operation of the Spirit of God in men. Nor was this efficacious work of God in them; for if it had, *Jesus Christ* would never have said unto them after this, *But I say unto you, that ye also have seen me, and believe not<sup>w</sup>*; nor would either any, or many of them, have gone *back, and walked no more with him<sup>x</sup>*; for the faith which is of the operation of God, never finally forsakes *Christ*, nor ends short of the salvation of the soul <sup>y</sup>.

To evidence and confirm this truth yet farther, we find in the holy scriptures, that faith in *Christ* is spoken of, as an act of obedience to the commandment of the everlasting God; as it is written, — *According to my gospel, and the preaching of Jesus Christ; according to the revelation of the mystery, which was kept secret since the world began; but is now made manifest, and by the scriptures of the prophets, according to the commandment of the everlasting God, made known to all nations for the obedience of faith<sup>z</sup>*. And unbelief is declared to be an act of dis-

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bedience,

<sup>w</sup> Heb. xi. 36.  
<sup>1</sup> John ii. 19.

<sup>x</sup> Ver. 66.    <sup>y</sup> Heb. x. 38, 39.    <sup>1</sup> Pet. i. 5.  
<sup>z</sup> Rom. xvi. 25, 26.



bedience, as it is written again, — *But they have not all obeyed the gospel; for Esaias saith, Lord, who hath believed our report<sup>a</sup>?* and, *what shall the end be of them that obey not the gospel of God<sup>b</sup>?* it is an awful question; for a most dreadful end awaits them, and will overtake them shortly, *when the Lord Jesus shall be revealed from heaven, with his mighty angels, in flaming fire taking vengeance on them — that obey not the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ; who shall be punished with everlasting destruction, from the presence of the Lord, and from the glory of his power<sup>c</sup>.* And many more places of holy scripture, freely offer themselves to prove this point; some of which will be taken notice of in what follows. In the mean time we observe, that thus far it is clear, namely, that believing on the Lord *Jesus Christ* hath eternal salvation certainly annexed to it: that this believing is a commanded duty, and an act of obedience, required of all those to whom the gospel is preached: and that not believing in *Christ* under the gospel revelation, is a reprovèd iniquity, and is by the word of truth declared to be a damning sin. And moreover,

2. THE holy scripture sufficiently proves, that it is by the moral law, that God requires this faith of all men to whom the gospel is preached: for it is most clear, as hath been already shewed, that as to this faith and unbelief of which we speak, the one of them is required as a commanded duty; and the other is reproved

<sup>a</sup> Rom. x. 16.<sup>b</sup> 1 Pet. iv. 17.<sup>c</sup> 2 Theff. i. 7, 8, 9.

ved and censured as a forbidden iniquity, in the holy scripture ; and if the one be commanded, and the other forbidden there, it must be either by the moral law that they are so, or by the gospel as a new law : for law and gospel comprize the whole bible. Now,

(1.) IF this faith is required, and that unbelief is forbidden, by the moral law ; as it is taken into the hand of *Christ*, and made the instrument of his government as King of *Zion* ; and as it belongs to the gospel dispensation, as an obligatory rule of life to all them that live under it ; then it is clear, that both this command and prohibition extend equally to every creature, to whom the word of faith is preached, without exception or limitation : for the subject of the moral law is a reasonable creature, considered as such ; and it knows no difference of elect or non-elect, regenerate or unregenerate ; but what it saith to one, it saith to all, and binds every one, to whom *Christ* is preached, as strongly and indispensibly to believe in *Christ*, as to believe in God ; for as *Christ is God manifest in the flesh*<sup>d</sup>, and *equal with God*<sup>e</sup> ; so the very same law, that obliges men to *believe in God*, equally obliges all men, to whom he is preached, to believe in *Christ*<sup>f</sup> ; and so to *honour the Son, even as they honour the Father* ; and he that so *honoureth not the Son, honoureth not the Father which hath sent him*<sup>g</sup>. Nor can any man pretend to loose himself from this obligation, but at the expence of becoming

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a So-

<sup>d</sup> 1 Tim. iii. 16. <sup>e</sup> Phil. ii. 6. <sup>f</sup> John xiv. 1. <sup>g</sup> Ch. v. 23.

a *Socinian*, and denying the true and proper Godhead of *Christ*: for as long as *Christ* is God, the first commandment will indispensibly oblige all those who hear of him, to believe in him to the saving of the soul; for he saith to every one of them, *Thou shalt have no other gods before me*<sup>h</sup>: and then, no doubt, thou wilt be safe and happy enough; for it is only mens cleaving to, and trusting in gods *that cannot save*<sup>i</sup>, that ruins them. But,

(2.) IF this faith be the command and requirement of the gospel, as a new law, specifically and fundamentally different from the moral law; then all the dangerous errors, of which that notion is prolifick, flow in upon us, like a flood, to carry us away, and there is no withstanding them. To instance in one out of many: If faith in *Christ* be a work of the gospel, as a new law; then we can never prove by the word of God, that it is not the matter of our justification before God; for no works are by the word of God excluded, from being the matter of our justification in his sight, but *the works of the law only*<sup>k</sup>. And hence, tho' I firmly believe, and therein greatly rejoice, that the blessed object of saving faith, the Lord *Jesus Christ and his righteousness*, is wholly of gospel revelation, *without the law*<sup>l</sup>: and that the grace of faith, through which we are saved, is the gift of God on the behalf of *Christ*; and

<sup>h</sup> Exod. xx. 3.

<sup>i</sup> Isai. xlv. 20, 21, 22.

<sup>k</sup> Gal. ii. 16.

Rom. iii. 20.

Gal. iii. 11.

Phil. iii. 9.

<sup>l</sup> Rom. iii. 21, 22,

23, 24, 25, 26.



and a fruit of the Spirit of *Christ*, and not of our selves ; as hath been before declared : yet I am equally obliged to believe, that the obligation to, and the act and work of the very same faith, considered as a duty, is the requirement of the moral law : for it is as such, that it doth, and no other way, that it can stand excluded, by the word of God, from being the matter of our justification before God ; which matter of justification, faith hath not, nor can ever find in itself ; but only in its glorious object <sup>m</sup>. Moreover,

FOURTHLY, For any man to affirm, that this faith in *Christ* is not required by the moral law, is no less than in effect to oppose and contradict the express word of God, spoken to us by *Jesus Christ* himself, by his beloved disciple *John*, and by the great apostle *Paul* ; three faithful, true, and unexceptionable witnesses, abundantly sufficient to establish this truth ; and by whose joint testimony we are assured, that *this is God's commandment, that we should believe on the name of his Son Jesus Christ, and love one another, as he gave us commandment* <sup>n</sup> : and that *the law is good, if a man use it lawfully* : in order to ascertain and secure which lawful use of it, and to prevent swerving from its proper end, and abusing it to vain jangling, it is premised and prefixt, that *the end of the commandment is charity, out of a pure heart, a good conscience, and faith unfeigned* <sup>o</sup> ;

even

<sup>m</sup> Rom. x. 4. and v. 19. and iii. 24, 25, 26. Jer. xxiii. 6.  
<sup>n</sup> 1 Cor. i. 30. If. xlv. 24, 25. <sup>a</sup> 1 Joh. iii. 23. <sup>o</sup> 2 Tim.  
 i. 5, 6, 8.

even the same *unfeigned faith which dwelt in* such eminent believers as *Lois, Eunice, and Timothy* <sup>p</sup>; and that was *faith which is in Christ Jesus*, and through which men are made *wise unto salvation* <sup>q</sup>; and which whosoever is without under the gospel, he falls short of coming up to the end of the commandment, which requires it: in which, both these great apostles speak the language of their and our Lord and Master, who hath told us, that *faith is a weighty, yea a weightier matter of the law*; and joined with *judgment, mercy, and the love of God*; and adds, *these things ought ye, pharisees and hypocrites, to have done*; and declares, that a dreadful woe is due unto those, who omit and pass over them <sup>r</sup>. From all which testimonies it appears, that *faith*, or believing on the Son of God, which, *whosoever* doth, we have good witness, *shall receive the remission of sins* <sup>s</sup>, and whosoever doth not, *shall die in his sins* <sup>t</sup>; I say it appears hence, that this *unfeigned faith* is commanded by the same God, and required by the same law, and of the same persons, with judgment, mercy, and the love of God and one another; which by an infallible expositor are delivered unto us, as the sum of the moral law <sup>u</sup>: and for any man to separate them one from the other, in point of obligation, is to put asunder what God hath joined together; and not only so, but it is to make void all obligations at once; and to open the door to all ungodliness

<sup>p</sup> 2 Tim. i. 5.

<sup>q</sup> Ch. iii. 15.

<sup>r</sup> Math. xxiii. 23.

Luk. xi. 42.

<sup>s</sup> Act. x. 43.

<sup>t</sup> Joh. viii. 24.

<sup>u</sup> Math. xxii. 37, 38, 39, 40.

godliness and unrighteousness, both of heart and life. For if it be no duty to believe, then it can be no sin not to believe on the name of the Son of God, with that unfeigned faith, which by him receives the remission of sins: and then it unavoidably follows, that all injustice, cruelty, and uncharitableness; the hatred of God, and one another; a filthy heart, and a bad conscience, are no sins; for all these wicked works of the flesh are forbidden, and their contraries required, only by the same law, that equally commands faith, and forbids unbelief.

NOR is it to any good purpose, or of any weight at all in this case, to object; that this faith is the gift of God, peculiar to the elect, the fruit of the spirit; and we are not able of our selves so to believe; and therefore it is not our duty: for all this is equally true of all other spiritual blessings, such as repentance towards God, and from dead works; the love of God; the fear of God; and of all the rest of the fruits of the spirit recited in *Gal. v. 22, 23.* and if, for these reasons, they are not duties incumbent upon us, then for men to live in the neglect and contempt of them, is no crime; and impenitency in iniquity, enmity against God, all the opposites to the fear of God, and all the rash passionate contentions, frowardness, rage, and intemperance that every where abound in the world, are no sins. And if our incapacity to avoid sin, or perform duty, be a sufficient discharge from our obligation to these things;



things; then men have neither duty to do, nor punishment to fear; for the *law* is made *void*, and hath no strength left to bind us, either to the one, or to the other; for sin can neither be committed, nor *imputed*, where *there is no law*<sup>w</sup>. And according to this wretched way of arguing, let but the sinner put himself out of a capacity to yield due obedience, and then all is at an end; for he hath no more either to do or suffer. But if our being *without strength*, could have cleared and secured us at this rate; then sure, *Christ* had no occasion to *die for the ungodly*, when they *were without strength*<sup>x</sup>, for by this argument the law could have nothing to say to them; and if it had no demands on the principals, it could have none on their surety. But though, blessed be God, I read of some happy souls, who are *redeemed from the curse of the law*; yet I read of none, who are delivered from an obligation of conformity and obedience to it.

FIFTHLY, Those who appear most warm against faith in *Christ* being a duty; do yet own and acknowledge *that* faith to be the duty of all men, to whom the gospel is preached, *which* the scripture declares is a *saving* faith: and therefore, in vain do they pretend and plead, that the faith which is a duty, and the faith which is saving, are two different kinds of faith. For they constantly maintain, that unconverted sinners ought to believe all that is reported by the gospel, concerning *Jesus Christ*, and God's design

<sup>w</sup> 1 Joh. iii. 4.

Rom. iv. 15. and v. 13.

1 Cor. xv. 56.

<sup>x</sup> Rom. v. 6.

<sup>y</sup> Gal. iii. 13.

design by him; and that the contrary is a sin. So that, by their own account of the matter, it is the duty of unconverted sinners to believe all that is declared in the holy scriptures, concerning the person, the offices, the incarnation, the life, death, resurrection, ascension, and intercession of *Christ*; and concerning the blessed fruits of them, as preached by the gospel to every creature, and received by all them that believe. Now I cannot but conclude, that the faith, to which God in his word hath annexed the same promises and declarations of grace and glory, is a faith of the same kind, and *like precious faith*: and if we there find, that he hath annexed the same *exceeding great and precious promises*, to the faith which they maintain constantly to be the duty of unconverted sinners; then it is undoubtedly of the same kind, and alike precious, with that faith, which they as constantly deny to be their duty. Let us then enquire, and see; and behold, it is written, *Whosoever believeth that Jesus is the Christ, is born of God; and this is the victory that overcometh the world, even our faith; who is he that overcometh the world, but he that believeth that Jesus is the Son of God?* These things are written, that ye might believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God; and that believing ye might have life through his name<sup>a</sup>. He saith unto them, *But whom say ye that I am?* And Simon Peter answered and said, *Thou art Christ the Son of the living God.* And Jesus  
E answered

<sup>a</sup> 1 John v. 1, 4, 5.

<sup>a</sup> John xx. 31.

*answered, and said unto him, Blessed art thou, Simon Barjona; for flesh and blood hath not revealed it unto thee, but my Father which is in heaven. And I say unto thee, That thou art Peter, and upon this rock I will build my church, and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it<sup>b</sup>. — See here is water; what doth hinder me to be baptized? And Philip said, If thou believest with all thine heart, thou mayest. And he answered, and said, I believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God. — And he baptized him<sup>c</sup>. — That is the word of faith which we preach, that if thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thine heart that God raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved<sup>d</sup>. Now here is a faith which the holy Jesus, and the holy Ghost assure us, that whosoever hath is born of God; overcomes the world; hath life; is blessed; may be baptized; and shall be saved. Yea, here is the faith, by means of which Christ builds his church on the blessed object of it, himself, as the spiritual Rock and firm foundation; and against which the gates of hell shall not prevail: for it is expressly declared to be the very faith of God's elect, whom God hath from the beginning chosen to salvation, through the belief and acknowledging of the truth, which is after godliness; whereunto he calls them by our gospel, to the obtaining of the glory of our Lord Jesus Christ<sup>e</sup>; and by which they are preserved from the possibility of being deceived by false Christs, and*

<sup>b</sup> Matth. xvi. 15, &c.  
x. 8, 9.

<sup>c</sup> Acts viii. 36, 37, 38.  
<sup>e</sup> Tit. i. 1.

<sup>d</sup> Rom.  
2 Thess. ii. 13, 14.



and *false prophets* <sup>f</sup>; being *kept by the power of God, through faith unto salvation* <sup>g</sup>: so that whosoever hath this faith, needs not to look for another. And yet, all this faith appears, in every text above recited, to be no other faith, than the very same which these men constantly maintain, is the duty of unregenerate men: so that the very same faith which God pronounceth *saving*, they assert to be the duty of all them that have the word preached unto them. And hence it is evident, that the faith which is the gift of God, and the faith which is the duty of men, are not two different kinds of faith; but the very same faith under two different considerations: in the one view, it is considered as a duty required by the law; in the other, as a grace bestowed by the gospel. And indeed if it were not a duty, it could not be a grace; that is, if faith was not required of us by the law, it could be no favour nor benefit to us at all to have it. For,

SIXTHLY, Such a faith, repentance, love, and fear of God, as are no duties required by the law of God, can have no concern at all in the holiness and happiness of men; and therefore, if the faith, repentance, love, and fear of God, of which these men speak, are not the very same faith, repentance, love, and fear of God, that are required of men, and which they stand indispenfibly obliged to have, and act, by the holy moral law of God; then they are a faith, repentance, love, and fear, that have

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no

<sup>f</sup> Matth. xxiv. 24.<sup>g</sup> 1 Pet. i. 5.

no concern at all, either in our holiness or happiness ; and whether we have, or want them, is of no consequence at all, either to the one, or to the other : for if we have them, we are never the better for them ; nor if we want them, are we the worse ; as will fully appear, by viewing each of them in particular. For,

1. ALL the holiness and righteousness of man, consists in his conformity to the image, likeness, and law of God, in principle and practice, disposition and conversation. In this *image and likeness of God*, man was *created*<sup>h</sup> ; and stands indispensibly obliged to remain and act according to it, in knowledge, righteousness, and true holiness. “ And if any person  
 “ hath this divine impress upon him, he hath  
 “ no need of regeneration, he is undoubtedly  
 “ fit for the enjoyment of God, whose shining  
 “ image he bears. A communication of holiness to him is unnecessary ; he hath perfect  
 “ purity of heart already. — Such a man cannot be the subject of regeneration, take it in  
 “ what view soever you shall please ; either as  
 “ the infusion of good habits, or as a reformation of life ; because he is not the subject of  
 “ any evil habits ; and his conduct, in all respects, has corresponded with the holy principles, from which he acted in every part of  
 “ it<sup>i</sup>.”

HENCE, it is plain that the necessity of regeneration, ariseth from the degeneracy of human nature, and the loss of the divine image by

<sup>h</sup> Gen. i. 26, 27. <sup>i</sup> Mr. Brine's Answ. to *Foster*, p. 112, 113.

by sin: and also, that regeneration, or new creation, for the matter of it, according to the exprefs word of God, is no other than being renewed in the spirit of your mind. Thus the apostle *Paul* expreffes it, *that ye put on the new man, which after God is created in righteousness, and true holiness<sup>k</sup>. And those who are risen with Christ have put on the new man, which is renewed in knowledge, after the image of him that created him<sup>l</sup>. It is the renewing of the Holy Ghost<sup>m</sup>. And that it is, for the matter of it, the very same original image of God, in which man was at first created, is plain, both from the so often repeated word [*renewed*] for renovation is not the making, producing, or bringing into existence, a thing that never was in being before: but it is a new framing, of that which hath once existed; but hath been spoiled, and defaced: and also, from this cogent and demonstrative argument, That it is neither possible in the nature of the thing, nor any where declared in the word of God, that there should be two specifically different images, of the moral perfections of God, imprest upon a reasonable creature; any more than that there are two Gods, posselt of two different kinds of moral perfections: and therefore we are assured, that those who *with open face behold the glory of the Lord, are changed into the same*, and not into another image, *by the Spirit of the Lord<sup>n</sup>*. And we hope no man will deny, that all men stand*

<sup>k</sup> Eph. iv. 23, 24.

<sup>l</sup> Col. iii. 1, 10.

<sup>m</sup> Tit. iii. 5.

<sup>n</sup> 2 Cor. iii. 18.



stand indispensibly obliged to bear this divine image, they being all under the same obligation; *be not conformed to the world*; saith the apostle, *but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind*: otherwise, their being conformed to the world, who are without this change, would not be their sin; because the contrary is not *their reasonable service* <sup>o</sup>. But if there be a faith, repentance, love, and fear of God that are no duties, then they have no part, nor concern, in that *image of God*, consisting in *knowledge, righteousness, and true holiness*; unto a conformity to which all men stand indispensibly obliged; and which is *renewed by the Holy Ghost*, in all them that are born again; nor can they have any *goodness, righteousness, or truth* in them; as all the *fruits of the spirit* have <sup>p</sup>. For all *goodness, righteousness, and truth* in men, have respect unto, and are to be measured by some obligatory rule; which can be no other, than that *law and commandment of God*, which is spiritual, *holy, just, and good* <sup>q</sup>: *for where there is no law, there is no transgression* <sup>r</sup>; no good nor evil, righteousness nor wickedness, truth nor error, but all things are alike, indifferent; and it is no way criminal, either to have and do, or to want and neglect this or that; for *sin is not*, cannot be *imputed*, *when and where there is no law* <sup>s</sup>: neither can there be any holiness, where there is no obligatory rule or standard, to require it, and measure it by. So that it is clear,

<sup>o</sup> Rom. xii. 1, 2.

<sup>p</sup> Eph. v. 9.

<sup>q</sup> Rom. vii. 12, 14.

<sup>r</sup> Ch. iv. 15.

<sup>s</sup> Rom. v. 13.

clear, that a faith, repentance, love, and fear, to which men do not stand obliged, can have no concern in our holiness at all. And,

2. WE may be happy without, and cannot be miserable for want of a faith, repentance, love, and fear of God, that are no duties: for law and justice can never curse and condemn us, for the want, or not doing, of what they never required of us; so that here we are for ever safe, and have nothing to fear. And if we have all that the law requires of us, as matter of duty, we need not to be at all concerned about what is not so required: for we stand intitled to all without it, which the law promises to the doer of it; and that is no less than life spiritual and eternal; and a greater happiness we cannot have. So that if there by a faith, repentance, love, or fear of God, which the law doth not require of us as duties, they are of no moment to us at all; for we may be as happy without them, as ever we can be with them.

FOR that life is promised to the doer of the law, is expressly asserted over and over. *The man that doth these things shall live in them<sup>t</sup>.* And that spiritual and eternal, as well as temporal life, is included in this promise of the law, is evidently and undeniably implied, in the threatening of death, annexed to the same law in case of disobedience; and was also confirmed by the visible pledge of *the tree of life, in the midst of the garden<sup>u</sup>*: for death, which is

<sup>t</sup> Lev. xviii. 5.      Ezek. xx. 11.      Rom. x. 5.      Gal.  
iii. 12.      <sup>u</sup> Gen. ii. 9.

is a privation of life, could not be threatned nor executed, where there was no life, either in possession or in promise; for that which never lived can never die: and consequently, if *Adam*, and all men in him, were not actually possessors of a divine and spiritual life, even the life of God; neither he, nor any of them, could ever be alienated from the life of God; for where there hath been no possession, there can be no alienation; and then there neither is, nor ever possibly could be, any such thing in the world as spiritual death, or a being *dead in trespasses and sins*: for if men were not spiritually alive, before sin entered into the world, they could never by its entrance become dead in trespasses and sins; for what was not alive, could not die.

AND if eternal life in heaven; or, which is all one, the felicitous fruition of God; for *whom have I in heaven but thee*<sup>w</sup>? says the plasmist; if this, I say, was not included in the promise, to be enjoyed on condition of due obedience; then eternal death in hell, or the execution of that sentence, *depart from me ye cursed into everlasting fire*, was not included in the threatening against disobedience: for what was not life in the promise, could not be death in the threatening. And whosoever denies that *Adam* had spiritual life in possession, and eternal life in promise, before the fall; must necessarily fall in with the opinion, that temporal death was only threatned, and temporal life was only forfeited, by the fall; and teach men, that spiri-  
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<sup>w</sup> Psalm lxxiii. 25.



tual death is nothing but an idle dream, and eternal death in hell a meer fiction : for if the first sin did not deserve, nor was threatened with eternal death, it will be no difficult thing to demonstrate, that no other sin can ever deserve, or be threatened with it.

BUT to put this matter for ever out of all dispute, that the very same eternal life that is preached by *Jesus Christ* himself, is promised by the law to the doer of it, we have the testimony of the faithful and true witnesses to two several men, who hearing him in his sermons often speaking of eternal life, and being desirous to obtain it, the one of them came to him, with the important question in his mouth, *Good master, what good thing shall I do, that I may have eternal life?* Unto whom he answered, *If thou wilt enter into life, keep the commandments* \*. Which answer was suitable to his temper, who expected to obtain eternal life by his own good works ; and was designed to convince him, as the sequel shews, of his mistake in seeking it this way ; not because the law had not power to bestow it, for that *Christ* intimates here, and affirms in the next case, it had ; but because he failed in keeping it, and therefore could not enter into life eternal that way. The other man was a certain lawyer, who stood up and tempted him, saying, *What shall I do to inherit eternal life?* He said unto him, *What is written in the law? How readeest thou?* And he answering, said, *Thou shalt love the Lord thy*  
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God

\* Matth. xix. 16, 17.

God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy strength, and with all thy mind, and thy neighbour as thyself. And he said unto him; Thou hast answered right: this do, and thou shalt live <sup>y</sup>.

THUS it is clear, that the only reason why the law cannot give life eternal, is not owing to any weakness in itself, but because it is become *weak through the flesh* <sup>z</sup>. For it will remain an eternal truth, that *the doer of the law shall be justified* <sup>a</sup>; though it is equally true, that no man, since the fall, ever was, or can be justified by the works of the law in the sight of God; because he hath not done, nor can do, any works answerable to the demands of the spiritual and holy law of God, whose *commandment is exceeding broad* <sup>b</sup>.

BUT it is evident from what hath been said, that no more is necessary to our eternal life and happiness, than what is required of us by the law; and that what is not so required of us, can have no concern in, nor can the want of it be any hindrance at all to our eternal happiness; which was the thing to be proved. And hence it is clear, that a faith which is not a duty, can have no concern at all in our holiness or happiness.

WHICH may be still farther confirmed, from the account the scripture gives us of what *Christ* is to us; for if eternal life was not promised in the law, then *Christ*, who is the only doer

<sup>y</sup> Luke x. 25, 26, 27, 28.    <sup>z</sup> Rom. viii. 3.    <sup>a</sup> Chap. ii. 13.

<sup>b</sup> Psalm cxix. 96.

doer of it, could not by his obedience to it in our stead procure eternal life for us; nor could we, by the obedience of this one, be so made righteous<sup>c</sup>, that being justified by his grace and blood<sup>d</sup>, we should be made heirs according to the hope of eternal life<sup>e</sup>; that so grace might reign through righteousness unto eternal life, by Jesus Christ our Lord<sup>f</sup>. But it is written, Christ is the end of the law for righteousness to every one that believeth<sup>g</sup>; who of God is made unto us wisdom, and righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption<sup>h</sup> (of the inheritance that was sold<sup>i</sup>) that the righteousness of the law might be fulfilled in us, who walk not after the flesh, but after the spirit<sup>k</sup>; and that the promise of eternal inheritance might be received by them that are called<sup>l</sup>.

Which being added to the foregoing account of the work of the Spirit in our regeneration and new creation, we are by both together most plainly taught, that all that Christ is made unto us, and all that the Holy Spirit doth in us, is no other than what the law of God requireth of us: for the whole extent, design, and intent of the work of Christ for us, and of the Spirit of Christ in us, is declared and affirmed to be, the end of the law for righteousness, and that the righteousness of the law might be fulfilled in us. So that those who will have a faith and a righteousness, which the law of God doth not require of us, must look out for another Jesus,

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<sup>c</sup> Rom. v. 19.    <sup>d</sup> Ver. 9.    <sup>e</sup> Tit. iii. 7.    <sup>f</sup> Rom. v. 20.

<sup>g</sup> Rom. x. 4.    <sup>h</sup> 1 Cor. i. 30.    <sup>i</sup> Lev. xxv. 23, 24, &c.

<sup>k</sup> Rom. viii. 3, 4.

<sup>l</sup> Heb. ix. 15.



and *another Spirit*, to be the authors of them, and for *another gospel*<sup>m</sup> to reveal them unto us: and when they have done all this, still that unrequired faith, and uncommanded righteousness, will be of no use to us, nor can have any concern at all in our holiness or happiness, until they have also found another law, that requires them as necessary thereunto.

BUT for a conclusion of this argument, we desire and earnestly intreat you all, to observe and remember, that we do not say, that any man is obliged to believe in *Christ*, or to do any other good work, or spiritual holy action, by his own power, independent of the grace of God: no, we deny all such positions absolutely as false and unscriptural, and all the assuming and groundless principles from which they flow; and are always ready to affirm and prove, that no man is able to do these things of himself, without the assistance of the grace of God; for which all those who live under the gospel, are bound to wait on him in the diligent use of his appointed means. But for any man to measure the sinner's obligation by his capacity to answer it, and to infer, that he is not bound, because he is not able, from a self-sufficiency, to do these things, is at once to excuse him from all sin, and loose him from all duty, and utterly to make void the whole law of God for ever. We know that *we are not sufficient of ourselves, to think any thing as of ourselves*<sup>n</sup>; but we dare not therefore say, that  
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<sup>m</sup> 2 Cor. xi. 4.

<sup>n</sup> 2 Cor. iii. 5.

it is no sin for us, not to have *God in all our thoughts*<sup>o</sup>; for we are equally assured, that *the thought of foolishness is sin*<sup>p</sup>. We fully believe, that *without Christ we can do nothing*<sup>q</sup>: but we dare not from hence draw the wicked inference, that the sinner, who is *without Christ*<sup>r</sup>, stands obliged to do nothing, and therefore can be guilty of no sin in *neglecting so great salvation*<sup>s</sup>. We know that we *were without strength*<sup>t</sup>; but we cannot therefore conclude, that we were without sin; which yet we must certainly be, if we stood bound to no duty. Moreover, we know, not only that it is impossible for the sinner to loose himself from the obligation to keep the whole law; but also, that it is impossible that God himself should ever loose him from it: for so to do, is quite inconsistent with his own glorious perfections, and would be totally subversive of all his rights of moral government; which he can never part with, nor contradict: for he cannot deny himself, nor cease to be God over all: and therefore, he can never loose a reasonable creature from his obligation to love him above all, as the best of Beings; to chuse him before all, as the highest happiness; to believe him in all that he declares, as the fountain of truth; to obey him in all that he requires, as the sovereign Lawgiver; to submit to him in all his disposals, as the supreme Lord; to depend upon and trust in him

<sup>o</sup> Psalm. x. 4.

<sup>p</sup> Prov. xxiv. 9.

<sup>q</sup> John xv. 5.

<sup>r</sup> Eph. ii. 12.  
and iv. 15.

<sup>s</sup> Heb. ii. 1, 2, 3.

<sup>t</sup> Rom. v. 6.

him at all times, and for all good things, as the first cause, and the giver of every good and perfect gift ; and to be for, and live to him alone, as the last end, that God in all things may be glorified : and therefore, whatsoever changes befall, or pass upon a reasonable creature in other respects, this obligation still remains upon him, indispensibly and perpetually, to the utmost extent of his eternal existence. And therefore,

SEVENTHLY, It is no where declared, affirmed, nor taught in the word of God, that faith in *Christ* is not a duty ; or that it is not the duty of those to whom he is made known, to believe in *Christ* ; nor that it is not the duty of every creature, no nor of any creature, to whom the gospel is preached, to believe in the name of the Lord *Jesus Christ*, to the saving of the soul. After above forty years daily search of the holy scriptures, I have never yet found the place where it is written, *It is not the duty of those who have a bible to believe in Christ* : or, it is not the duty of those to whom the word of faith is preached to believe in, and confess *Christ*, with that faith, whereby *with the heart man believeth unto righteousness, and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation*°. I have asked those who hold, and endeavour to propagate this opinion, What is written in the old and new testament? *How readest thou?* But none of them have yet been able to shew me, where it is written, *Thou shalt not, thou oughtest not*

• Rom. x. 10.



*not to believe in Christ ; or, it is not the duty of men who live under the gospel, to believe in, and receive the Lord Jesus Christ.* So that I think I may boldly conclude, that it is no where so written in the book of God. And hence I infer,

1. THAT those who affirm, and teach men, that saving faith in *Christ* is not a duty, as they have taken upon them to preach another gospel than that which is written in the scriptures ; so they must furnish themselves with another, and a new bible, that hath never yet appeared in the world, before they can ever bring, *Thus saith the Lord*, or, *it is written*, to prove their doctrine : and before any of those, who have a due regard to the oracles of God, as the only ground and rule of their faith, will ever embrace and entertain it.

2. THAT whoever teacheth, in matters of eternal concernment, a faith that is not a duty, and an unbelief that is not a sin ; the faith and unbelief of which he speaks, are no where to be found in the oracles of God : and as they are of his own invention and contrivance, he may form and fashion them to his mind and fancy, and put what *image* and *superscription* upon them he pleases : but those who look for their religion in the bible, and prove all things by that sacred touchstone, will never see reason to be in love with them, nor to receive them as current coin ; but will call and treat them as reprobate silver. And so they will do by all the other numerous, unwritten, negative propositions of this set of men. And therefore,

ore, let all men, who are not willing to be imposed upon, make it their care and practice, to imitate and follow the commendable and safe example of the noble *Bereans*, who tho' they had *Paul* for their preacher, would receive nothing upon trust, even from him without trial; but *searched the scriptures daily, whether those things were so* P. For,

3. WRANGLING and striving about words to no profit, and seeking to evade the force of plain scripture, by distinctions and consequences of mens devising, and saying, *Thus saith the Lord, when the Lord hath not spoken*; though they may perplex the weak, and stagger the unstable; yet they will never induce those to shift their ground, who build their faith on the foundation of the apostles and prophets; and know that every principle and practice in religion, stands on nothing but sinking sand, which hath not, *thus saith the Lord*, and *it is written*, to support them.

EIGHTHLY, The only argument produced to prove, that faith in *Christ* is not a duty, is both unscriptural, and utterly destructive of all true religion: as will fully appear in the following examination of it.

AND, because those who are resolved to maintain, that faith in *Christ* is not a duty, can find no word of God to prove their position, or to defend their notion, they are at last constrained to seek another foundation; and have determined, for want of a better support,

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to venture the weight of their whole building on the crazy bottom of one single human argument, which, in a few plain words, is only this : *Adam* had not faith in *Christ*, nor was obliged to have it, before the fall ; and neither did, nor could lose it, either for himself, or for his offspring ; and therefore none of his fallen posterity are obliged to believe in *Christ*. And since so great a stress is laid upon this argument, it may not be improper for us to try the strength of it, and see what wonders it can work. And to this end, I desire that the following things may be duly weighed, and seriously considered by us, before we admit it for cogent and conclusive. And,

I. I MUST put you in mind again, that this argument is so wretched and defenceless, that it hath not one, *Thus saith the Lord*, or, *It is written*, in the whole Book of God to support it ; for we do not therein meet with one word, of the faith that *Adam* had before the fall : it is not so much as mentioned, one way nor other, in the whole bible. But when men are grown wise above what is written, and have laid down a position, that is no where to be found in the word of God ; it is but agreeable to their first undertaking, to end as they began, and leave the whole weight of their building to rest ; or rather, to sink and fall, on the sandy foundation of a meer human argument. For as it is most evident, that herein they do not ; so they do hereby even declare, that they cannot either build, or be built, on the sure and firm foundation



dation of the prophets and apostles, who, in all their writings, have never spoken so much as one single word of this matter. And,

2. I DESIRE it may be well observed, that if this argument, *viz.* What *Adam* had, we all had in him; and what *Adam* lost, we all lost in him; and are become debtors to God on both accounts; but *Adam* had not a saving, confirming, and persevering faith in *Christ* before the fall, and did not lose it for his posterity; therefore, they are not debtors to God for, nor obliged to have and act such a faith since the fall: I say, if this argument be admitted as cogent and conclusive, it will equally and unavoidably prove a number of other propositions, that are utterly subversive of all true religion, both natural and revealed; and will effectually support and defend the worst errors and vices upon earth. A specimen of which will more than sufficiently appear, in the following instances.

(1.) HEREBY deism will be invincibly established for ever; and all the deists and infidels in the world will need no more, to clear them of all sin, and secure them against all fear of punishment, for their disbelief and contempt of all divine revelation: for it is fully as clear, and demonstrably evident, that *Adam* before the fall had not, nor we in him, the faith of the report of the gospel concerning the person of *Jesus Christ*, God-man; nor concerning his work and office, as Mediator and Saviour, Prophet, Priest, and King; and did not lose this  
faith

faith by the fall ; and therefore his fallen posterity are not debtors to God for this faith, nor bound to believe one tittle of the gospel revelation, nor are they guilty of any sin, nor chargeable with any crime, in not believing it, while they remain in unregeneracy ; which, I suppose, will be as long as they abide in unbelief. And so they, and their infidelity, are all at once, and for ever, vindicated and justified by an argument, which, perhaps, not one of them ever did, or would have thought of, if it had not been framed for them, and put into their mouths, by those who profess a regard to divine revelation : but they have hereby betrayed the cause, they profess to espouse, into the enemy's hand, and have furnished the adversary with an argument against both it and themselves ; which, upon their own principles, they can never answer, nor evade.

(2.) THIS argument, as it is borrowed from, so it will equally serve to prove and support the corrupt doctrines of *Arminius*, and of those who embrace his scheme. That it is borrowed from *Arminius*, and was the grand foundation upon which he built the fabrick of his notions, we have the testimony of the learned *Peter du Moulin*, in his *Anatomy of Arminianism*, p. 73, &c. of the learned Mr. *Norton*, in his *Orthodox Evangelist*, p. 205. and also of twelve Scots ministers, in their *Answer to twelve queries*, printed 1722, who tell us, p. 16. that “ here *Arminius* laid the foundation of his rotten principles. — *Adam* (said he) had not  
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“ power to believe in *Christ*, because he needed him not ; nor was he bound so to believe, because the law required it not : therefore “ *Adam*, by his fall, did not lose it.”— So that those who build their notions upon the basis of this argument, are beholden to *Arminius* for their foundation, and join with him in raising their superstructure upon it, though they pretend to shape it in a different form. And indeed, such a rotten foundation is as fit to build one sort of rotten principles upon, as another ; and all principles are worthy to be suspected ; that have no better foundation to support them.

(3.) By this argument, all the abominable principles, and vicious practices of true and proper *Antinomians*, and lawless libertines, have an agreeable sanctuary provided for them to retreat unto, and shelter themselves in, safe and secure from all obligations to holiness and righteousness of any kind, and from all liability to punishment for the contrary evils. For it is manifest, that *Adam* before the fall had not a power, nor we in him, if he sinned and fell from his sinless purity and perfection, to rise again ; to knock off the chains and fetters of sin and *Satan* ; to return again to his due allegiance to God, and to enter into a new estate and course of sinless holiness and perfect obedience ; and therefore did not lose this power for himself, nor for his posterity. And to infer from hence, as this argument teacheth men to do, that therefore the posterity of fallen *Adam* are not debtors



debtors to God for, nor obliged to these things, because a power is now necessary to the performance of them, which *Adam* neither had, nor lost, nor we in him, is at once utterly to destroy and make void the law; and to affirm, that no man, in the fallen state, is under any obligation at all, to perfect holiness and sinless obedience; and that the continuance of men in enmity and rebellion against God, and their persisting in a state of impenitency, and in a course of abandoned wickedness, is in them no crime at all; because to purify their hearts, and cleanse their hands from these things, requires a power that *Adam* never had, nor lost, nor they in him. And therefore, for the law to curse and condemn, and God to take vengeance on them for these things, is both unreasonable and unjust. And so they have no occasion to fear it; for to be sure, the Judge of all the earth will do right, and will never lay upon man more than is meet; and so men may go on in their sins, without any fear or restraint at all. For though man had once power to keep his heart and hands clean, and lost it; yet he never had power, if they were once defiled with sin, to wash his heart from wickedness, and cleanse his hands from sin, without the blood of *Christ*, and the grace of God; and therefore, if this argument be conclusive, he never was, nor can be obliged to it, nor be punished for the want of it. For,

4. BY this argument, God stands for ever precluded, and shut out, from demanding satisfaction

tisfaction for the breach of the law, either of *Adam*, or of any of his fallen offspring: for it is most certain, that neither *Adam*, nor any of them in him, before the fall, had ever a price in his hand, sufficient to make satisfaction to law and justice for his transgression: and therefore, the law can make no such claim upon any one of them; for that would be to demand of them what they never had, nor lost; and therefore, could never be debtors to God for. So that by this argument, men are at once both loosed from all obligations, and delivered from all fear; for the law can neither command them to return to their obedience, nor demand satisfaction of them for their transgressions. And, which is yet worst of all,

5. HEREBY, the whole undertaking, obedience, sacrifice, and satisfaction of *Christ* for us, is totally subverted for ever. For the true end, and full extent of *Christ*'s undertaking for us, as our surety, is thus declared unto us in the holy scripture; *God sent forth his Son, made of a woman, made under the law, to redeem them that were under the law, that we might receive the adoption of sons*<sup>a</sup>: for *Christ* is the end of the law for righteousness, to every one that believeth<sup>r</sup>: for what the law could not do, in that it was weak through the flesh; God sending his own son, in the likeness of sinful flesh, and for sin, condemned sin in the flesh: that the righteousness of the law might be fulfilled in-us, who walk not after the flesh, but after the spirit<sup>s</sup>.

And

<sup>a</sup> Gal. iv. 4, 5.

<sup>r</sup> Rom. x. 4.

<sup>s</sup> Rom. viii. 3, 4.

And *Christ* hath redeemed us from the curse of the law, being made a curse for us :—That the blessing of Abraham might come on the Gentiles through Jesus Christ †. But if this argument, which is made use of, with so much confident assurance, against faith in *Christ* being a duty, be true and conclusive ; then the whole undertaking of *Christ*, his sinless obedience, painful sufferings, invaluable sacrifice, and precious atonement, as for us, is nothing but an idle dream, and a meer empty noise of words. For as neither *Adam*, nor we in him, had ever power (if he sinned and fell, and we in him) to rise again, and return to our sinless holiness, and perfect obedience ; nor ever had a price in our hands by which to make satisfaction and atonement for sin : if therefore, according to this argument, because we never had, nor lost them, the law could never require these things, neither of fallen *Adam*, nor of his fallen offspring, no more than to make themselves wings, and flie to heaven ; then it is most clear and certain, that they could never be required of *Christ* for us, as standing in our law-place : for what is not due from the principal, can never be demanded of the surety ; who can never be obliged, by any rule of law and justice, to pay more than is owing by him, for whom he becomes bound.

AND thus you see, that this dangerous and scriptureless argument has a direct tendency to sap the foundations, and totally subvert all true religion;

† Gal. iii. 13, 14.



religion: for it equally, and unavoidably serves the cause, and justifies the principles and practice, of the *Deist*, *Socinian*, *Arminian*, *Antinomian*, and *Libertine*, and saves us the labour of disputing any longer, whether it is our duty to believe in *Christ*; for it leaves us no *Christ* to believe in, nor any thing for which to believe in him. And therefore, it is high time for all those who love the Lord *Jesus Christ* in sincerity, to unite together as one man, in an immoveable endeavour to bury this dangerous argument for ever out of their sight; and say, with one consent, *I will make thy grave, for thou art vile*; and may the Lord give commandment concerning thee, that no more of thy name be sown<sup>u</sup>.

<sup>u</sup> Nahum i. 14.

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